

the Attorney General of the United States and the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army did exactly that, and they stood up for the Constitution. They were heroes on that day as well.

And somehow I think it's fitting that you are here on this day, and we can celebrate your heroism and you can participate in a moment of unique citizen heroism in the history of America. Think what it was like for those nine kids to show up and face a jeering mob, armed only with their notebooks and their school books. Think what it was like for their parents to send them into the storm not knowing whether they would come home.

But if you look at the whole history of America, and if you look at the whole history of our military services, we see an unbroken chain in the continuing struggle to make our historic commitment to freedom and equality more real in each succeeding generation.

Every American knows about our military's vital role in protecting our national interest and our values around the world. But the Armed Forces also has reflected and protected our values here at home. Our military promotes equality by rewarding merit without regard to race or gender and sets an example for every American and for every American institution where two or more people work together.

And as I said, you cannot talk to any person who was alive and well in Little Rock 40 years ago who doesn't remember that it was the Army paratroopers who ultimately stood as a bulwark of protection for those nine little children, who were there for them because their President ordered them to stand up for the law of the land here at home.

So I hope that you will always remember, throughout all your conventions and all your meetings, that you happened to come to Little Rock on a special day for America and a special day for America's military, a special example of personal patriotism and bravery by civilians, and that all of us—all of us—are profoundly grateful that you're here, for your valor and your sacrifice, for being there when your country needed you the most.

Thank you for what you have done, and thank you, too, for what you continue to do as living examples of everything we love most about America.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:44 p.m. at the Aerospace Education Center. In his remarks, he referred to Paul Bucha, president, Congressional Medal of Honor Society; Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock; Mayor Patrick Henry Hays of North Little Rock; State Senator Mike Beebe; former Arkansas Governor Sid McMath; and Mary Lou Keener, wife of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement Urging House of Representatives Action on Campaign Finance Reform

September 25, 1997

I am greatly encouraged by the statements calling for House action on campaign finance reform legislation made earlier today by Democratic Leader Gephardt, and yesterday by House Majority Leader Armey. I applaud these two House leaders for their commitment to scheduling a House floor debate on this critical issue before Congress adjourns for the year.

This bipartisan call for action is a promising sign that we are moving forward in our response to America's demand for reform. I urge the Members of the House to take the next step and give their full support for the meaningful bipartisan campaign finance reform offered by Representatives Shays and Meehan. This measure is both balanced and effective and it addresses many of the most pressing needs for reform.

Congress faces the best opportunity in a generation to enact campaign finance reform. Let us work together in a bipartisan spirit to enact the Shays-Meehan legislation and answer the public's call for reform.

Proclamation 7027—Austrian-American Day, 1997

September 25, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For more than 200 years, the life of our Nation has been enriched and renewed by the many people who have come here from around the world, seeking a new life for themselves and their families. Austrian Americans have made their own unique and lasting contributions to America's strength and character, and they continue to play a vital role in the peace and prosperity we enjoy today.

As with so many other immigrants, the earliest Austrians came to America in search of religious freedom. Arriving in 1734, they settled in the colony of Georgia, growing and prospering with the passing of the years. One of these early Austrian settlers, Johann Adam Treutlen, was to become the first elected governor of the new State of Georgia.

In the two centuries that followed, millions of other Austrians made the same journey to our shores. From the political refugees of the 1848 revolutions in Austria to Jews fleeing the anti-Semitism of Hitler's Third Reich, Austrians brought with them to America a love of freedom, a strong work ethic, and a deep reverence for education. In every field of endeavor, Austrian Americans have made notable contributions to our culture and society. We have all been enriched by the lives and achievements of such individuals as Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter; Joel Elias Spingarn, who helped to found the NAACP; psychiatrist and educator Alexandra Adler; lyricist Frederick Loewe, who helped to transform American musical theater; and architects John Smithmeyer and Richard Neutra.

Americans of Austrian descent have also helped to nurture the strong ties of friendship between the United States and Austria, a friendship that has survived the upheaval of two World Wars and the subsequent division of Europe between the forces of East and West. On September 26, 1945, a conference was convened in Vienna among the

nine Austrian Federal States that helped to unify the nation and paved the way for recognition by the United States and the Allied Forces of the first postwar Provisional Austrian Government. Setting the date for the first free national elections, this important meeting laid the foundation for the strong, prosperous, and independent Austria we know today.

In recognition of the significance of this date to the relationship between our Nation and the Federal Republic of Austria, and in gratitude for the many gifts that Austrian Americans bring to the life of our country, it is appropriate that we pause to celebrate Austrian-American Day.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Friday, September 26, 1997, as Austrian-American Day. I encourage all Americans to recognize and celebrate the important contributions that millions of Americans of Austrian descent have made—and continue to make—to our Nation's strength and prosperity.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:59 a.m., September 29, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 30.

Proclamation 7028—Gold Star Mother's Day, 1997

September 25, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As a free people, Americans have always sought to live our lives in peace; but history's harsh lessons have taught us that to remain free, we must be prepared for war. At many times and in many ways throughout the year,